

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

## CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS ( In the hear of Lancashire )

In days of old, in a land once steeped in lore, Superstitions reigned, beliefs from days of yore.  
Mr. Wilkinson, with a jocose sway, Revealed customs and tales of a bygone day.

In that humble room, where old souls gathered round, Superstition's grasp on the district was found. No surprise it brought, to the aged there, Horseshoes nailed behind doors, warding off despair.

Evil spirits and witches, a fear held so strong, Blamed upon the poor and frail, decrepit throng.  
Old souls like Fitt Ann and her son William, they say, Branded with dealings with the evil one's sway.

But behold, the light of education's grace, Sweeps away relics, superstitions we chase. No more shall they return, thank God, he proclaims, Reason and knowledge, the old beliefs tamed.

Ah, customs of old, the duckling stool's reign, In villages many, a tradition to sustain. A chair on a pole, a swing over water's deep, For garrulous vixens, their anger to steep.

The chair would receive them, a pest to their kin, Plunged into the water, a cleansing akin.

Drowning their fury, as deemed necessary, Cooling the scold, a disciplinary reverie.

In Worsthorne's village, by Cross House Green, A ducking-stool pit, where this sight was seen.

Cuckstool Lane it's called, a lane with a name, A reminder of customs, now never the same.

Ladies and gentlemen, our journey finds its end, Patience, I may have tested, your hearts I commend. In matters like these, dry and tedious they seem, Yet a glimpse into history, an instructive dream.

A hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Wilkinson's display, And to the chairman, for guiding the way.

The meeting now disperses, minds richly fed, With tales of customs and superstitions, widely spread.

Let us treasure these stories, woven in our past, For they remind us of how our beliefs are cast.  
In the ebb and flow of progress and time, We shed old customs, but keep their essence prime.

By Donald Jay